

THE FIRST ROTATION:

(93.88.1) Fifth Michigan Volunteer Cavalry Regiment (Example of how flags are still being added to collection)

Coming Home: On November 8, 1993, at the Michigan Historical Museum, a special ceremony marked an unusual acquisition. Two flags of the Fifth Michigan Cavalry were brought home to Michigan. It was the culmination of months of work by the Ad Hoc Fifth Michigan Cavalry fundraising committee, which made it possible to purchase the two flags, which were on sale in California. No funds donated to Save The Flags was used to procure the flags--all were raised separately for this explicit purpose.

Raised in the Detroit area and mustered in on August 30, 1862, the Fifth Michigan Cavalry joined the First, Sixth and Seventh Cavalry Regiments to make up the Michigan Cavalry Brigade commanded by General George Armstrong Custer. In 1863, Russell Alger, future governor of Michigan, took command of the regiment. On July 24, 1863, Captain Smith Hastings of the Fifth Cavalry, a daring young 19-year-old officer from Coldwater, defied a superior officer's direct order to abandon their battery's guns during a retreat at Newby's Cross Roads, Virginia. Dismounting, and with the help of the men under his command, he helped to slowly move the guns to safety--all the while under fire. His action saved the battery from capture. Wounded at Trevillian Station, Virginia, in June 1864, Hastings was promoted to major in August and became the colonel of the regiment in December 1864.

After the war, Hastings left Michigan to become a grain dealer in Colorado. 32 years later, on August 2, 1897, Hastings was awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor for his action. His act of bravery had long been credited to someone else, but the error was finally corrected through the efforts of the commander of the battery Hastings saved.

This standard, as well as a swallowtail guidon, was found in Smith Hasting's personal effects many years after his death. Through the generosity and hard work of many individuals and organizations, it was possible to acquire the flags when they were offered for sale. REMEMBER THAT NO FUNDS DONATED TO SAVE THE FLAGS WERE USED. SAVE THE FLAGS FUNDS ARE USED ONLY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE COLLECTION--NOT TO PURCHASE FLAGS.